Illegal tapping of telephones

429. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Centre has decided to incorporate in the Indian Telegraph Act, 1985 that gives both centre and the State Governments the power to intercept any message in case of a public emergency or in the interest of public safety and the Supreme Court in 1966 framed guidelines to regulate such surveillance to curb illegal tapping of telephones; and

(b) if so, to what extent these norms have been welcomed by all the political parties who had opposed tapping of phones of Members by Government and private agencies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Freedom fighters' stamps

430. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether freedom fighters' stamps release applications are still considered;

(b) if so, the number of applications made in the last eight

years; (c) of these applications, how many stamps have

been released;

(d) whether there are any applications pending;

(e) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(f) whether any procedure is being followed to accelerate the release of the pending applications?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It requires to be ascertained from the record of past eight years. It needs more time. The proposals received after examinations are divided into two groups. The first which were not found to fulfill the norms. The second type of proposals placed before the PAC for consideration. The number of proposals not placed before the PAC is not readily available. This requires to be ascertained from the record of the past eight years. The information will be provided to the Hon'ble MP later. We may seek time allowance of one month to provide the information.

During the preceding eight years 142 proposals on freedom fighters were placed before the PAC for consideration.

(c) Out of the proposals received during the period 63 commemorative stamps on freedom fighers have been issued.

(d) Out of 142 proposals placed before the PAC stamps on 63 personalities have been issued. The PAC did not recommend the remaining proposals.

(e) and (f) The proposals are examined in the light of prescribed norms for issue of commemorative stamps. The proposals fulfilling the norms are placed before the PAC for consideration and recommendations. Stamps on personalities up to 25% of the total stamps are issued every year on their respective birth centenaries etc. or to commemorate a significant event into which the personalities may have significantly contributed, etc. This criteria is applied in expediting or accepting proposals for stamps on freedom fighters on a year to year basis.